The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights

Report

"The people of Sinai under the guillotine of terrorism"

June 2019
Research Methodology:

This report is based on the methodology of field research, collecting testimonies from eyewitnesses in the region, as well as documenting information from government and ministerial laws, decisions and official statements issued by government agencies, In addition to the report of the National Council for Human Rights on the living conditions of the population of El Arish and Sheikh Zweid, under the campaign of the army and the police against terrorism. This information is subject to analysis and research in order to verify the accuracy of all information contained in this report.

The report also relies on the testimony of the members of the organization residing in Sinai, and the personal interviews of the people of Sinai, within the descriptive approach to describe all the actions carried out by government agencies and the official bodies, with regard to the basic rights of citizens and the issuance of official decisions in this regard.

It is also noteworthy to mention the vital role played by the counter-terrorism observatory which was established by the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR) in February 2008 and has been active until now. The main objective of the observatory at that time was to support the democratic development in Egypt by monitoring and observing the impact of including anti-terrorism clauses in the constitutional amendments to this development on the one hand and the impact of the new anti-terrorism law on this development also. Additionally, the observatory included members of the political parties, human rights activists, members of the parliament, and Shura Council, law professors and counter-terrorism experts. Furthermore, the Egyptian Organization also held several seminars in Geneva on terrorism in Sinai, which confirmed that terrorism has negatively affected the security of the citizens of North Sinai and affected their right to freedom of movement.

Introduction:

Sinai, the precious territory that has become a captive occupation, and then became a hostage to the systematic neglect and isolation of its liberator. It became the largest place of strategic vacuum that lasted stupidly and intuitively 40 consecutive years. It is the voice of history in which the future has been formed from the history of its past. From there came Musa and entered by Jesus and Mariam, in addition to the hearing of the voice of God on its ground. It is from the east the land of the Diaspora and the date for the aspirants, and from the west, the land of salvation and dignity, it is the holiest of religions on the land of Egypt.
The security problems in Sinai are not new of its kind, nor are they the direct result of the January 2011 revolution. This place has long been an arena for complex socio-economic grievances against the government of President Hosni Mubarak in addressing the region's economic and development needs. These grievances, combined with the complications of the destabilizing Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the proliferation of weapons, have created an explosive mix that unleashed a wave of terrorist attacks in 2011, which quickly developed with the rule of former President Mohamed Morsi, speeding up the Sinai sinking into a deep security mess. Thus, the Sinai region has been identified as the most important and most suitable place for the export of terrorism because it has many advantages that can make it an ideal environment for terrorism and terrorist groups. It is also capable of extending its bridges of life through the two most important places adjacent to Sinai: the Gaza Strip and the Israeli border, especially with the total disregard from the Egyptian state for decades, which has prompted Sinai to be a gathering area for the terrorist groups. Hence, this report which is entitled "the people of Sinai under the guillotine of terrorism," explains how the terrorism has reached Sinai and the efforts made by the Egyptian armed forces and the Ministry of Interior in countering these terrorist attacks. The report includes the following sections:

First: Terrorism and Human Rights.

Second: Terrorism in Sinai and includes the geographical and demographic nature of Sinai, the tunnels and the centre of terrorism, the settlement of Sinai as a terrorist base in the days of the deposed President, Mohamed Morsi, the most prominent terrorist attacks in Sinai, and the displacement in Sinai.

Third: the efforts of the army and police in combating terrorism.

Fourth: Conclusion and recommendations

Fifth: Pictures and documents

First: Terrorism and Human Rights

Terrorism affects all aspects of life, including human rights. Terrorism, as a result of the loss of life and the harm to physical integrity and the imposition of certain thought, is an attack on the human right to life and the integrity of the human body and his right to think and express. Thus, this contravenes with the text of articles ( 3 and 18 ) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.
Terrorism is an attack on the human rights. The United Nations Human Rights Committee also considered it in its 1992 report at the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1993. Its document affirmed that terrorism, its implementation, methods and practices in all its forms and manifestations aim to undermine human rights and fundamental freedoms; it also threatens the territorial integrity of the state and destabilizes governments. In addition to the Cairo Population Document, the Copenhagen Document on the Social Development Summit and the Ninth Conference on Crime Prevention that was held in Cairo in 1995.

Furthermore, the United Nations General Assembly has expressed its deep resentment at the increasing number of innocent people killed by terrorists in indiscriminate violence and terrorism, which cannot be justified under any circumstances and has unequivocally condemned terrorism, its methods and practices as activities aimed at the destruction of human rights and undermining the main pillars of a pluralistic civil society. At its 52nd session, entitled "The question of human rights", it decided that terrorism was a real threat to human rights and that human rights violations constituted a motive for the emergence and practice of terrorism by some, especially minorities, who might feel marginalized and were not recognized by the State. Hence ethnic or separatist terrorism might emerge as a direct result.

If this is the direct impact on human rights, there is an indirect impact of terrorism on human rights that is reflected in the measures that the State will take to combat or limit terrorism, which inevitably include a restriction on human rights. Thus, the confiscation of their rights implies that resistance, violence and sometimes terrorism are the best way to regain them.

The international community has recognized that the phenomenon of international terrorism is a complex phenomenon with profound and historical causes, including social injustice, underdevelopment, intolerance, occupation, the unjust international order and globalization, in which certain measures must be taken to counter this phenomenon. These measures shall protect the human rights and not only settling for the security and punitive measures. In Article VI, paragraph 148 of the report of the Committee of Elders states that "There is a need to develop a global counter-terrorism strategy that addresses the root causes, strengthens responsible States, and upholds the rule of law and human rights. It includes:

(A) Promote social and political rights, the rule of law and democratic reform, end occupation, address major political grievances, combat organized crime and reduce poverty and unemployment.

B) Exert efforts in order to combat extremism and intolerance through education and promote public debate. Both documents have warned from human rights
violations stemming from the fight against terrorism if not carried out within the framework of the law and the control of the judiciary.

It is also stated in paragraph 147, "Governments and civil society organizations have expressed concern that the ongoing war on terrorism has in some cases eroded the two values that terrorists aim to undermine - human rights and the rule of law - and have expressed fears that the approach to dealing with terrorism based on military, police and intelligence measures might threaten to undermine the efforts to promote good governance and human rights.

Additionally, it is stated in paragraph 49 of the Secretary-General's report, "Terrorists are not accountable to anyone, but we must not lose sight of our responsibility to citizens all over the world. We must, as we wage a war on terrorism, never compromise the human rights "I urge member states to find a special rapporteur to report to the Commission on Human Rights on the compatibility of counter-terrorism measures with international human rights law"

Indeed, the Secretary-General of the United Nations has appointed a Special Rapporteur who ought to monitor the compatibility and dissonance between the actions of the war on terror and international law and human rights as well as, he will report periodically to the United Nations.

Counter-terrorism and human rights violations:

States often resort to the suppression of public freedoms and human rights under the name of combating terrorism, however, this is fraught with a great dilemma between the state's full executive powers over the individual and the general rights and freedoms that must be fulfilled and that through the regulation of a bunch of restrictive laws in order to protect the security and safety of the society.

Hence, there is a fundamental problem in this regard, which is the degree of harmonization between the fight against terrorism and the protection of human rights. This problem has been a major concern in the field of human rights, which led to the issuance of many charters and declarations that advocate and try to reconcile these dilemmas. In this context, the Security Council at its ministerial level meeting in 2003 issued a statement annexed to the resolution No. 456 of 2003, which states that "States shall ensure that any measures taken to combat terrorism comply with all their obligations under the international law, measures should be taken in accordance with the international law, in particular international human rights law, refugees and international humanitarian law ".

Furthermore, the Counter-Terrorism Committee has recently adopted the "United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy" on 8 September 2006, which stressed that there is no discrepancy between the effective counter-terrorism measures and
the protection of human rights. It also includes the procedures that aim at guaranteeing human rights for all and the rule of law as a fundamental basis for combating terrorism.

At the same time, the United Nations human rights mechanisms were increasingly aware of the crisis in international legal protection of human rights. In the first anniversary of World Human Rights Day, after the September attacks, 17 United Nations human rights investigators and experts issued a joint statement saying "General policies ought to provide a fair balance between universal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on the one hand and legitimate concerns of national and international security on the other hand, additionally, the fight against terrorism must not lead to violations of human rights which were guaranteed by the international law.

In 2006, the United Nations Sub-Commission on the promotion and protection of human rights adopted a draft of principles and guidelines on human rights and terrorism. In the section entitled "General principles", the Commission advised the member states "to focus as much international action as possible on the development and implementation of forward-looking strategies rather than dealing with individual terrorist acts or a series of terrorist acts. In a commentary attached to the annex of the draft principles, the Sub-Commission provided an explanation of the logic behind this principle in particular where the chairman expressed his concern about the adoption of "hasty" and "far-reaching" measures which were taken by the states to combat terrorism that would "violate the basic principles of the law"

The draft principles addresses the conditions under which the international law allows states to disable certain human rights obligations while countering terrorism and makes clear that such exceptional procedures "must strictly comply with the rules set out in the applicable international or regional instruments"

The draft principles also states that "utmost care" must be taken to ensure that any exceptions are met by strict time limits and not to be permanent as well as they do not violate the lives and freedoms of ordinary persons unlawfully or any procedural rights of persons accused of non-terrorist crimes.

In the section concerned with the arrest, detention, trial and punishment of terrorism suspects, the Sub-Commission reaffirmed on the general international principles that control the process of the arrest, however, at the same time it provided some requirements for the evidence used to justify the arrested person. For example, the draft principles made it clear that no one could be arrested on the basis of evidence obtained through an inspection that violated international standards, nevertheless in certain circumstances, full-scale inspections or restrictions on freedom of movement could be made to facilitate the collection of evidence, but there must be sufficient reasons to believe that there are terrorists or evidence that
justifies the inspections.
In addition to that the ICJ also addressed this problem. The Berlin Declaration of August 29, 2004, has been launched due to the fact that terrorism constitutes a serious violation of human rights, it stressed that every state has an obligation to take effective measures to counter acts of terrorism. According to the international law, all states have the right and the duty to protect the security of its citizens.

In this regard, the Berlin Declaration has set out many obligations for the states in order to protect the human rights in the fight against terrorism:

1. The protection: There is an obligation on all the states to respect and guarantee the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals within their own legislation or under the rule of an effective and legitimate government.
2. The independence of the judiciary: In the implementation of counter-terrorism measures, the state must ensure the independence of the judiciary and its role in reviewing the legislation, and it should not intervene in the judicial process as a whole or disregard its rulings.
3. The principles of criminal law: The state must ensure that acts of terrorism are defined in the law according to the principle of legality; additionally the state must ensure that the criminal law is not applied retroactively, and the Legal practices relating to freedoms, fundamental rights and criminal liability of acts of terrorism cannot be criminalized. Furthermore, the state must apply existing criminal laws and should not enact new laws that might be hostile or tolerate strict administrative procedures, especially those related to the deprivation of liberty.
4. Indispensable rights: The state must not restrict or limit rights that are included in any treaty or under any customary law. The State must ensure that any failure to protect any right during an emergency must be necessary and proportionate to that threat and does not distinguish between race, colour, sex, religion, language, political, national, social, racial or constructive origin, birth or property, or any other case.
5. Compulsory norms: The State must under all circumstances prevent torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and all acts contrary to the binding norms of the international humanitarian law, such as non-judicial provisions and enforced disappearance.
6. Deprivation of freedom: The state must not detain any individual secretly without communications and it should register all the detainees. Additionally, the detainees should be allowed, wherever they are, to meet with their lawyers, family members and doctors. The state must also inform the detainees with the reasons of the detention and the charges against them and must be brought before a judicial body at all times and conditions.
7. Fair trial: The state shall, at all times and in all circumstances, ensure that the
accused are tried before an independent, indivisible and established judiciary under the law with all the guarantees of fair trial, including the imposition of the accused innocence, the right to test evidence and the right In the defence, in particular the right to effective legal counsel and the right to judicial appeal. The state must also ensure that the civilian defendants should be investigated by a civilian body and tried in a civil court rather than a military court, and that all evidence obtained through torture or any other form of violation of human rights against the defendant cannot be recognized administratively or taken in any judicial proceedings.

8. Protection of fundamental rights and freedoms: During the implementation of counter-terrorism measures, the state must respect and protect fundamental rights and freedoms, including freedom of expression, religion, thought, belief, assembly, the formation of groups and the peaceful demand for self-determination In addition to the right to privacy, which is particularly important in the collection and dissemination of information.

9. Settlement and compensation: All states must ensure that any person who has been subjected to a violation of human rights as a result of the actions of the state or a non-governmental entity, with the support from the government during the counter-terrorism process, shall have an effective compensation additionally those who are responsible for human rights violations shall be prosecuted and also there should be an independent body that monitors counter-terrorism measures.

10. Non-transfer: The state shall not deport and extradite suspects in terrorist acts to any other state unless there is a pledge of not being subjected to any violation of their rights, including torture, inhuman treatment, enforced disappearance, non-judicial rulings, lack of a fair trial or the imposition of the death penalty.

11. Compliance with the international humanitarian law: During armed conflict and occupation, the state must implement and respect the laws and principles of international humanitarian law and human rights law.

In this regard, the Berlin Declaration has undertaken to establish a commission of commissioners, government agencies and organizations which aims to work individually and collectively in monitoring counterterrorism measures, ensure compliance with law and human rights instruments, and to face any suspicious actions especially related to anti-terrorism legislation within countries, through prosecution and judicial action, to encourage the creation of options and alternatives that are fully compatible with international human rights law, and to adopt global and local counter-terrorism measures. Moreover, the commission called for the establishment of a monitoring mechanism between governments and
NGOs to ensure that counter-terrorism measures comply with international norms, human rights instruments and the law as called before in the NGOs Resolution on the need for an international mechanism for monitoring human rights and combating terrorism, adopted at the International Commission of Jurists' (ICJ) conference on 23-24 October 2003.

Finally, despite the fact that there is a necessity in confronting terrorist acts and protecting society and civilians as a primary responsibility of both the state and the government, nevertheless at the same time we emphasize that the respect for human rights and the standards of justice in the face of these terrorist groups shall not contradict with the decisions of confrontation and security.

Second: Terrorism in the Sinai:

Natural Geography of Sinai:

Sinai enjoys a distinct strategic location at both the regional and national levels as it represents the link between Africa and Asia through the common border with Palestine. It is also located between three Mediterranean waters in the north, the Suez Canal in the west, the Gulf of Suez from the south west and the Gulf of Aqaba from the southeast and east.

The Sinai Peninsula is located in the eastern part of the Arab Republic of Egypt and represents 6% of its total area. It is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea from the north, the Gulf of Suez, the Suez Canal from the west, the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba from the south and the Rift valley from the east, extending from Kenya through the Horn of Africa to the Taurus Mountains, Turkey. In accordance with the state decree No. 84 of 1979, the Sinai Peninsula was divided into the governorates of South Sinai with its capital Tur and North Sinai, with its capital Arish. It includes three centers: Al-Arish Center in the north, Al-Taha in the center and Al-Tur Center in the south.

It has an area of about 2,564 km2 and an estimated population of about 325,000 according to the 2006 census. North Sinai has six administrative centers: El Arish, Rafah, Sheikh Zuwayd, Bir El Abed, Hassana and Nakhil, comprising 82 villages and 458 sub-districts.

Moreover, the Sinai Peninsula also has many rugged mountains, the most famous of which is the "Halal Mountain", whose caves sometimes reach 300 meters within rugged mountain ridges at altitudes ranging from 30 meters to 900 meters in the highest peaks of the Rocky Mountain.

Thus, in a historical isolation imposed by a geographical position, the Nile Valley separated the Delta and the Upper parts of Egypt from the Sinai Peninsula, which is
eastward in addition to the Suez canal which separated the Sinai from the valley with a waterway (the longest of all industrial waterways in the world). This has made the people of the Sinai peninsula, usually called "Sinai Bedouins," all belong to nomadic Bedouin tribes living in the desert. They are tribes outside the spotlight. Their historical geographical isolation is still above all the variables of their land and a reason that cannot be ignored in the settlement of Sinai by terrorist members.

**The population of Sinai:**

At first glance, some believe that the Sinai is inhabited only by Bedouins. However, the reality is that the inhabitants of Sinai are divided between urban people and Bedouin belonging to more than one tribe. They are distributed in several areas but the largest concentration is in the province of North Sinai. The most famous tribes of North Sinai are Sawarka, Rahilat, Masayid, Bali, Bayadiya, Dugarah, Rishiyat, Aqila, Al-Aharsa and Rumailat. Their numbers range from 500 to 12,000 inhabitants. These tribes are concentrated in the coastal areas of the north and in the east of the Canal and the Gulf of Suez. Furthermore, they have many customs and traditions which they are keen to revive and maintain, such as the customary judiciary (a special jurisdiction of the nomadic tribes (Bedouins) that has its rules and procedures, which gives specific persons the right to rule, each of them is specialized in a type of crimes and knows the provisions and penalties of this crime. The Sawarka tribe is the largest tribe of Sinai, it is an authentic Arab tribe, where the people are located in the east and west of El Arish in the North Sinai and extends to the Sheikh Zuwaid North and the airport west. In addition to the presence of a large number of them in Gaza and other parts of Palestine. After the 1948 and 1967 wars, some of the tribesmen moved to Jordan and merged with some Arab tribes there, and their men provided assistance to the Egyptian armed forces during the withdrawal in 1967. The Masaid tribe is considered the strongest tribe of El Arish after the Sawarka tribe. Additionally, the Ayayda tribe is also one of the largest tribes in North Sinai in terms of number, and has an extension in the province of Giza, while the tribe of Bayadiyah is located between Qantara east and El Arish in the area of Bir al-Abd and an extension in the province of Sharqiya, which follows the tribes of Rumailat and Ayyeda in terms of population.

**The tunnels and the scourge of terrorism:**

One of the main reasons that has led to the increase rates of terrorist acts in Sinai is the existence of tunnels on the Egyptian border with the Gaza Strip where the first tunnel between Rafah and Gaza was dug by an Egyptian decision in order to break the siege and support the resistance. However, Hamas has used it to strike the
stability in Egypt, through cooperating with some tribal sheikhs in Sinai in total secrecy. They were transporting weapons and food even inside the Gaza Strip without disclosing this process.

The first tunnel was discovered by the Israeli occupation army in 1983, less than one year after the implementation of the Camp David Agreement between Egypt and Israel in 1982, but the tunnels were limited and the occupation authorities were trying to control, prevent and demolish it, fearing the entry of weapons into the armed resistance factions, especially with the beginning of the first intifada in 1987. The tunnels operated before 2000 on the smuggling of drugs and gold, which achieved huge profits. The weapons were rarely smuggled to the resistance. At the beginning of the Al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000, the tunnels began to take the other direction of smuggling arms to the resistance factions. The number and activities has been significantly increased and the occupation authorities worked, in the beginning of the Intifada, to explode them, but this did not prevent them from continuing to work, as well as digging several tunnels which mostly got destroyed by the Israeli authorities.

With the beginning of the siege imposed on the Gaza Strip in 2006, the phenomenon of tunnels began increasingly to grow and spread. The Israeli restrictions on trade and the movement of people inside and outside the Gaza Strip, along with regular Israeli attacks, have prompted the Palestinians to dig deeper and longer tunnels and improve its infrastructure. Additionally, a wide variety of goods was transported through tunnels –including building materials, food, medicines, clothes, fuel, computers and cars, on an annualized basis. These goods are worth around $ 500-700 million dollars.

The construction of tunnels has increased in 2007, following the repeated closure of the seven crossings between the Gaza Strip and the intensified siege imposed by Israel after controlling Gaza. Moreover, Hamas began a project to build a maze of underground concrete shelters with multiple entrances and exits linked to tunnels under residential areas in Gaza and it started observing the tunnels very well where elements of the jihadists were moving freely through Sinai to Gaza and vice versa. The Egyptian intelligence was angered by Hamas' actions, it demands their surveillance, and accuses them of ignoring their actions, because they control all the tunnels located in the east of Rafah crossing.

Therefore, on the long run, the closure of the tunnels will be a real problem for Hamas and a direct threat to the large majority of the families which have a real power in the southern Gaza Strip so Hamas does not want to confront them.

After the fall of the Mubarak regime and its replacement by the Muslim Brotherhood government headed by Mohamed Morsi, Hamas expected a radical change in the policy towards the Gaza Strip. Indeed, many high-level Egyptian delegations visited Gaza, including the visit of the Muslim Brotherhood, followed by a visit by members
of parliament and the Salafi party (El-Nur). In late 2011, the Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of Gaza was allowed to leave Gaza for the first time since 2007 and made regional tours. Furthermore, Hamas was allowed to open an office in Cairo and meet with the foreign ministry officials and the President Mursi himself, not just Egyptian intelligence officers. In February 2012, Haniyeh delivered a Friday sermon at the Al-Azhar mosque, encouraging further digging tunnels during this period. After the massacre that killed 16 Egyptian soldiers in Sinai in August 2012, the Egyptian National Security Institute realized that fighters and arms could flow in both directions. Since June 2013, before ousting the President Mohamed Mursi, the Egyptian army has launched its most effective operation against the tunnel network. In this context, the amount of fuel entering Gaza through tunnels in the last week of June 2013 fell to about 10 percent of the amount entered earlier this month. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has reported that it is "the lowest quantities recorded since August 2012". Thus, this was a proof that the Egyptian forces already had the ability to close the tunnels, and that what was lacking was the will to move. These steps were not seen in the past as contributing to the protection of Egypt's sovereignty and stability.

The proliferation of weapons in Sinai in Mubarak Era:

One of the reasons of the massive proliferation of weapons in Sinai, in addition to the existence of the previous tunnels, is its geographical and tribal nature. The nature of the tribal community there makes the spread of weapons normal and something to be proud of that makes the person capable of defending himself. Moreover, Sinai’s geographical location across the border with Israel has played a major role in the spread of weapons on the peninsula. According to the testimonies of the citizens of Sinai, there are 3 tributaries of arms in Sinai, the first of which were the remnants of war. There are around 5 to 6 million mines in Sinai, planted by Israel and not given full maps for them. These mines were used by the terrorist groups in the manufacture of Improvised explosive devices (IEDs), to carry out operations against the armed forces. The second source of arms in Sinai is the presence of the Palestinian resistance factions, while the third source is the control of Hamas on the Gaza Strip, which helped to spread weapons in large quantities in the Sinai Peninsula, making it difficult for any researcher to monitor the quantities of weapons in Sinai, especially in light of the security chaos.

The most prominent jihadist groups based in northern Sinai:

1. The Tawhid and Jihad Group is one of the largest organizations and the first terrorist group in Sinai. It is a purely a “Takfiri” group based in northern Sinai under
the leadership of Jihad Hani Abu Hashita, who is sentenced to death in the Taba bombing case. One of the most important ideas adopted by this group is the hypothesis of jihad, It defines jihad as a sacred and imposed on all assumptions. This group is responsible for the first massacre of Rafah in 2012, which killed 16 people from the armed forces.

2. The survivors of the fire: It is one of the most dangerous groups that break away from Tawheed and Jihad group, which possesses the most dangerous platforms for missiles, mortars and heavy anti-aircraft weapons, and carried out many jihadist operations as it considers soldiers and police as infidels, but it is specialized in carrying out jihadi operations against Israel, where it is responsible for the explosion of the natural gas tunnel to Israel across northern Sinai.

3. “El-Rayat El Sawdaa” - The black flags were active in the 1990s and has many ideas that resemble to the ideas of the Takfiri groups. It adopts the ideas that based on the atonement of the ruler, who does not implement the law of God additionally it considers the soldiers and officers of the police and the army as soldiers of the infidel ruler and tools in order to consolidate his rule that is contrary to the religion and law. These groups are deployed in central Sinai, the border region and some areas of El Arish. One of these groups declared itself after the January 25 revolution, exploiting the security vacuum that Sinai suffered and named itself the organization of black flags (El-Rayat El Sawadaa).

4. Ansar Bait al-Maqdis: This group was founded in the Gaza Strip in 2005 by the Palestinian and Egyptian extremist individuals and moved to Egypt since August 2011, where many of its members are based in the North Sinai region at Mount Halal, which is headquartered in Egypt. It adopts many extremist ideas such as the atonement of the ruler and disobeying him in case of the non-implementation of the Islamic law.

The activities of these groups have increased dramatically in Egypt following the deposition of President Mohamed Morsi, where they adopted several operations, including the bombing of the gas pipeline between Egypt and Israel, the assassination attempt on Egyptian Minister of interior, Mohamed Ibrahim, in Cairo and the bombing of the Dakahlia Security Directorate.

Moreover, there were numerous bombings and terrorist attacks against members of the armed forces and police, most notably the second massacre of "Karam al-Qawadis", some of which were called the military wing of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

5. The soldiers of Islam: This group is based in Mount Halal and the mountains of Mahdia. It adopted the Declaration of the first Islamic Emirate in Egypt in this region,
and it is one of the most dangerous armed groups and organizations where it possesses heavy advanced weapons, including RBJ, anti-aircraft, tanks and guns. Its main task is to train the fighters.

6. The organization of Shura El-Mujahideen: It is one of the largest and extremist groups in Sinai which adopts the ideas of the Takfiri groups and have a direct relationship with Al Qaeda. It is located in Mount al-Halal, area of Sheikh Zuwaaid and has 600 fighters who are directly connected to Hezbollah, Tehran and the Islamic groups that were deployed in Egypt in the 1990s, in addition to having very advanced weapons smuggled from Israel through tunnels and from Sudan through the Red Sea.

7. El- Jihadiya: It is located in the border area, especially in the cities of Rafah and Sheikh Zuwaaid and in the center. It adopts the ideas of al-Qaeda, but does not have a direct relation with them additionally it adopts the ideas of the Islamic Group regarding the jihad, which aims to establish the Islamic state and restore the Islamic Caliphate.

8. - the Army of Islam: It is mainly headquartered in Gaza and has a branch in Sinai. It carries out operations against Israel and in Egypt against the security forces. Additionally, it is the main accused by the security services in the bombing of the Church of the Saints, in Alexandria, January 2011.

9. Ansar El-Gamaa: It is an armed group which emerged after the 25th Jan – revolution. It is located in Rafah and Sheikh Zuwaaid, and aims to impose its ideology on the society through the implementation of the Islamic law in addition to the interference in the affairs and behaviors of individuals, and sought to the establishment of Sharia courts in order to implement the provisions of Islamic law as it does not recognize neither the Egyptian law nor the customary law prevailed among the tribes in Sinai.

The settlement of Sinai as a terrorist base in the ousted president Mohamed Morsy Era:

Without a shadow of doubt, the period that followed the 25th Jan-revolution until Mohammed Morsy took over the presidency, was considered the golden period for the formation of these terrorist groups. At this time, the security services were under the pressure of the increasing presence of terrorist groups in Sinai. These groups have evidently exploited the political confusion in Cairo. Furthermore, when the ousted President “Mohammed Morsy”, who is a member of the Muslim Brotherhood group, took power. Egypt has suffered increasingly from the waves of terrorism, which was manifested in the transfer of armed individuals from the Sinai Peninsula to the different governorates of the Delta before June 30, and with the support of the Freedom and Justice Party and its offices in the provinces, in addition to Hamas’s exploitation of tunnels in order to strike the
stability in Egypt.
The Muslim brotherhood organization has taken significant steps to declare itself as the strongest and most dangerous group in confronting any party, either inside or outside, or in order to combat any regional power. This organization has high-level trained members called militias that would get involved in any situation as a regional power. Therefore, the group was the fastest-growing party on the scene. It has expanded its scope and merged with other groups, in addition to its enjoyment with a political cover from the head of the Egyptian state.
In spite of all these reports, the state was in a stage of futility and was completely distracted with the conspiracy theories. However, it was concerned with some reform measures. For example, a decision was made to bring people from outside Egypt to Sinai, in addition to allowing them to own the land. This could have led to a serious population imbalance in the light of the existing problems for the people of Sinai with the real owners of the lands. Thus, the situation has prompted the armed forces to interfere with military decisions in order to prevent land ownership to any party.
With the outbreak of the 30th June Revolution, the Brotherhood and their supporters began to prepare on the ground on how to resist the long fight that the Brotherhood would engage with the Egyptian people. The most important of these was the transfer of the trained cells which have received a huge amount of money and trainings, and now they are required to provide assistance in resisting the people. Some of these cells headed to Cairo and the governorates of the Delta. They were provided safe haven by the Freedom and Justice Party that was spreading in all provinces, and also through the members of the Muslim Brotherhood, who have many factories and farms. However, these groups with their weapons and materials had evidently failed in interfering in 30th June revolution in which its result was decided by the Egyptian army.
From that time, these cells remained inactive in their places, and the fight against terrorist groups has started then as they are confronting the political system, the 30th of June revolution, the referendum, the president and his government.

The establishment of terrorist camps in cooperation of the Muslim Brotherhood with Mohammed al-Zawahiri:

After the release of Dr. Muhammad al-Zawahiri in March 2011, he attempted to revive the terrorist jihad organization on the land of Egypt. Without a shadow of doubt, the changes that took place in the political scene in Egypt after the 25th of Jan revolution, has significantly helped the revival process of the terrorist jihadi organization. This organization was formed from the outset to support the Muslim Brotherhood and former President Mohamed Morsi as well as using it as a weapon
against the group's opponents, pressure on state institutions, confront state security institutions, target facilities and spread chaos, if the former president is removed from office.

Indeed, Mohammed al-Zawahiri and his group had confronted the state after the escalation of protests against former president Mohamed Morsi. Moreover, the investigations proved that the Guidance Office used Mohammed al-Zawahiri to support them against the people, the army and the police before and after 30th of June revolution.

According to the investigations made by the Supreme State Security Prosecutor under the chairmanship of Counselor Tamer al-Farjani in the case of reviving the terrorist Jihad organization in Egypt in which Mohammed al-Zawahiri and 67 others were accused, it was found that the Muslim Brotherhood has a significant role in reviving this organization and supporting the armed groups during the rule of President Mohamed Morsi. This was resulted in the high rates of arms smuggling, financial and political support to them and supply with weapons in order to use its members in the destruction of the Egyptian state and its institutions in case of the Egyptian people has called against its rule.

In the era of former President Mohamed Morsi, al-Zawahiri had managed to link the organization with other terrorist organizations inside and outside Egypt, and to employ a number of terrorist members, and use others including Sheikh Nabil al-Maghrabi, who was responsible for the programs and courses in order to prepare new members and rehabilitate them intellectually and dynamically as well as militarily, on how to use the automatic and light weapons, manufacturing and planting of explosives and launching rockets. Furthermore, Because of the financial support, the organization managed to mobilize many young people to join the organization and rehabilitate them physically and legitimately by disseminating the Takfiri ideas, including hostility and atonement to the state, facing the regime, attacking the officers and installations of the armed forces and the police and targeting the Copts and their places of worship.

According to the investigations, the organization managed to set up camps in Egypt to train its members and prepare them intellectually and physically. In addition to taking a mosque under construction in El-Matareya in the heart of Cairo governorate as a preparation camp for the new youth that will join the organization. Moreover, they used a farm in the Adliya district in Belbeis, Sharqia province, as a training camp, and a store in the 6th of October City in order to train youth on the use of weapons and the storage of explosives and bombs.

The organization divided its members into separate cluster cells in order to escape from security surveillance and avoid monitoring. The tasks were divided among the various cells. Each cell is specialized in implementing the tasks of the terrorist organization leadership such as the Such as the assassination squads, the teams
involved in vandalism, surveillance and monitoring teams responsible for monitoring vital installations and VIPs.

For its part, the National Security Agency managed to confiscate several papers concerning the organizational plans used by the members of these cells, which included important information about the guerrilla plan to exhaust the security services, the methods of carrying out the incursions into different places, the methods of blowing up installations and detonating them. The terrorist plan included information and pictures of some of the vital installations that were prepared to be targeted, especially the High Dam, the power stations, the national centre for energy control, the natural gas lines, the fuel depots, the satellite station, the security directorates in all governorates, the installations of the armed forces, the port of Damietta and a number of churches. In addition to their possession of documents that contain names, statements and addresses of the residence of some officers of the armed forces, police officers and a number of public figures who opposed the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood, in order to carry out terrorist operations against them.

Furthermore, some computers were found with the accused persons, which contains plans and terrorist operations stored in special files, some files containing images of public figures and vital places, video clips of a number of terrorist operations carried out by members of the group, both inside Egypt and abroad, records about the bombings of the main gas export line as well as video clips of educational courses on how to carry out terrorist operations, stages of manufacture, planting and detonation of improvised explosive devices and methods of guerrilla warfare in addition to many of the Takfiri fatwas (Ideas) that incite against the institutions of the Egyptian state.

Through the investigations, 25 of the 68 defendants confessed on the commission of crimes including the establishment of a terrorist group that contravenes with the provisions of the law, aimed at disrupting the provisions of the constitution and laws, preventing state authorities and institutions from carrying out their activities and attacking the personal freedom of citizens. Some of the accused have also confessed on the involvement in crimes that target members of the public authority, the attempted murder of police officers and possession of explosives, and firearms in addition to the possession of a 82-mm mortar shell, rocket launchers, bombs, rocket-propelled artillery rounds, chemical and explosives manufacturing equipment and contact plates, some of them are from foreign companies.

For his part, The Attorney-General “Hisham Barakat” referred Mohammed al-Zawahiri and 67 terrorist members to the criminal trial for being charged with running and organizing a terrorist group linked to al-Qaida which aims to violate to change the regime by force, in addition to attacking officers, spreading chaos in the country and endangering the security of the society.
The situation in Sinai after ousting the President Mohammed Morsi:

The violence by the armed terrorist groups has vehemently increased since the ousting of former President Mohamed Morsi on July 3, 2013, and almost daily attacks on the army and police forces took place in northern Sinai, which later expanded to include the civilians as well. As a result, a military campaign was launched in Egypt in the Sinai Peninsula in order to confront the Islamic jihadist groups, which pose a great threat to the Egyptian national security and threaten the law and order. This was the Eagle operation on 14 August 2014.

In the light of this report, the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR) is tackling the terrorist attacks against the people of Sinai since the ousting of former President Mohamed Morsi, as well as the operations that targeted the security forces. There is no doubt that the people of Sinai and the Egyptian armed forces bear the brunt of the war on terror as many of them are victims of the terrorist operations.

The most prominent terrorist attacks in the Sinai:

Some threats might be verbal, such as the threat of terrorist groups to the tribal leaders and residents of northern Sinai for not cooperating with the army. Therefore, the people of Sinai are afraid to cooperate with the army after many threats have been made and several people who cooperate with the security services have been killed.

Other threats took place on the ground: In this context we will talk about the most important threats for the people of Sinai by these terrorist groups, including:

- On July 6, 2013, unknown gunmen killed the pastor Mina Abbouj in front of the Church of Marmina in Al-Arish.
- On 15 July 2013, a bus transporting workers was targeted at Al Arish Cement Company, killing 5 civilians and injuring 15 others.
- On August 19, 2013, the second Rafah massacre was carried out in Rafah on the border between Egypt and Israel, where anonymous gunmen forced the soldiers to get out of their buses and opened fire on them. This incident resulted in killing 25 soldiers of the Central Security Forces. After the arrest of 11 accused people, it was found that there were five members from Hamas, three foreigners and three local residents.
- On September 11, 2013, the military intelligence building was targeted by two car bombs that resulted in the killing of 6 military personnel, injuring 17 others, and 7 civilians, including three women.
- On 16 February 2014, a bomb exploded under a tourist bus near the Egyptian
border with Israel, killing 4 people, including 3 Korean tourists, the driver of the Egyptian bus, and injuring 17 others.
- On 26 February, 2014, gunmen seized a vehicle belonging to the electricity company and stole 600,000 pounds of salaries after threatening the employee who was responsible for disbursing the salaries of his colleagues from the bank.
- On July 14, 2014, armed elements tried to fire missile at a military unit, but it was a failed attempt, as the missile landed on the market of al-Arish by mistake, killing 10 civilians and injuring 32 others.
- On August 28, 2014, some gunmen cut off the heads of four North Sinai men after they were accused of working for the army. Ansar al-Maqdis organization claimed responsibility for the incident.
- On 20th of November 2014, the Ansar Beit al-Maqdis group claimed responsibility for the bombing of the house of Abdel Moneim al-Mani’i in the village of Mahdia, south of Rafah in northern Sinai, after accusing him of dealing with the Zionist entity. This was resulted in injuring him, his family and a number of his neighbours.
- On 23th of December, 2014, Ansar Beit al-Maqdis, claimed responsibility for a terrorist attack against the people of Sinai, where they executed two people on charges of treason and espionage for the Egyptian army in Sinai. They broadcasted a video on YouTube showing jihadist gunmen shooting two persons. Therefore, the people are afraid to cooperate with the army in particular. At least 12 persons have been slaughtered after being accused of spying for the Egyptian army or Mossad, the French news agency (Agence France Presse) reported.
In addition to the bombing of the gas line, west of El Arish on the same day, which it led to the interruption of the flow of gas in the residential and industrial areas in central Sinai.
- On 8th of January, 2015, unknown gunmen kidnapped two Swarka tribesmen from the south of Sheikh Zwaïd in northern Sinai and took them to an unknown place.
- On 10th of January, 2015, three people were killed, including two whom their heads were cut off in the northern Sinai, area of Sheikh Zwaïd, by unknown gunmen because of their cooperation with the Egyptian security forces. Investigations indicated that Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis was the first defendant in this case.
- On 12th of January, 2015, the security forces in North Sinai found four bodies lying on the route in different areas, east of the city of al-Arish and it was found that they were shot by guns. On the same day, three bodies were found, including two bodies in the area of Karam al-Qawadis, east of Al-Arish and a body in Al-Shalaq area. The investigations revealed that Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis was involved involvement in the killings of the seven people as they were kidnapped by gunmen.
- On 13th of January, 2015, Takfiri members, in northern Sinai, fired live ammunition at the residents of this area, leaving six dead and others in serious condition. On the same day unknown assailants fired a missile from an unknown location on a shop in Al-Barth area, which resulted in injuring two residents of North Sinai.
• On 14th of January, 2015, the security forces found four bodies of civilians in North Sinai Governorate, three of them were beheaded in the city of Sheikh Zuwaiz, while the fourth with gunshot wounds. The four bodies were taken to a hospital in Rafah but no one claimed the responsibility for that.

• On 16th of January 16, 2014, a woman was killed by a shell on her house in the village of Husseiniya in Rafah, northern Sinai. This shell was intended to target a security checkpoint but it accidentally fell on her house.

The successive terrorist attacks against the security forces, include:

• On 5th of July, 2013, a terrorist attack on an army ambush in the village of “Al-Gawda” took place in northern Sinai, which led to the death of a soldier and injured three others, as well as a policeman was killed in the area of Al-Masaid in Arish by armed men riding a motorcycle.

• On 7th of July, 2013, the gas pipeline in Arish was blown up and a soldier was killed in an attack on an army ambush in central Arish.

• On July 12, 2013, the police officer Mohammed Abu El-Enin was killed after being shot in a ambush in Arish. Additionally, a security officer was also killed in an attack on a police station in El Arish and a police officer was also killed in al-Obour district of Arish.

• On July 18, 2013, anonymous gunmen attacked two police stations in the cities of Rafah and Sheikh Zweid, killing a police officer.

• On 24th of July, 2013, an attack on the checkpoint took place in Abu Sukkar, south of El Arish, killing a soldier while performing the military service.

• On 1st of August, 2013, a security officer was killed in an armed attack that targeted a security checkpoint near a hotel in El Arish.

• On 2nd of August, 2013, there was an attempt to target a hotel which was frequently visited by security officers by placing a bomb inside but it did not cause any deaths or injuries.

• On 15th of August, 2013, an armed attack took place in the checkpoints of Al Safa and Al Sokar in southern Arish, killing 4 soldiers and injuring 5 others.
• On 8th of September, 2013, an explosive device exploded while a truck was transporting armored vehicles to the south of Sheikh Zuwaïd, which resulted in injuring three soldiers.

• On 7th of October, 2013, a car bomb targeted the Security Directorate of South Sinai, which resulted in the death of 5 soldiers and injuring more than 50 others.

• On 10th of October, 2013, an explosion targeted the security barrier of El-Arish by a car bomb, which resulted in killing 4 soldiers and injuring 5 others.

• On 22 of October, 2013, an armored vehicle and a troop carrier were targeted during an attack by an improvised explosive device in northern Sinai, killing one soldier and injuring seven others.

• On 20th of November, 2013, a bus transporting soldiers on the Rafah-Arish road was bombed, which resulted in killing 11 soldiers and injuring 35 others.

• On 26th of January, 2014, a military plane crash in the area of Sheikh Zuwaïd after being hit by a missile by armed members, which resulted in killing its crew (6 military personnel). Ansar Beit al-Maqdis claimed responsibility for this incident.

• On 30th of March, 2014, gunmen attacked a bus carrying soldiers at the Shalaq area on the Arish-Rafah road in northern Sinai, killing one soldier and injuring three others.

• On 2nd of May, 2014, an explosive device exploded at a joint security point between the police and the army, they were responsible for securing “El-Tor” road in southern Sinai, killing one soldier and injuring four others.

• On 23rd of May, 2014, anonymous gunmen opened fire on a police patrol at the international flag number 17 south of Rafah in northern Sinai, killing one officer and injuring two others.

• On 28th of June, 2014, a police ambush was targeted in the Shalaq area at the entrance to the city of Rafah, killing 4 members of the Central Security.

• On July 25, 2014, two security officials were killed in the Shalaq area in northern Sinai.

• On 2nd of September, 2014, a landmine exploded in an armored vehicle which was inspecting the security situation on the Sheikh Zuwaïd road in Rafah, killing 11 security officers.

• On 16th of September, 2014, anonymous persons planted an explosive device next to a armored vehicle in Rafah, killing six security men and injuring 2 others.
• On 17th of October, 2014, a bomb exploded targeting a security patrol in Arish, killing two policemen and injuring 8 others.

• On 19th of October, 2014, an explosive device exploded in the south of the city of al Arish, killing six members of the army and injuring five others.

• On 24th of October, 2014, an army ambush and two vehicles of the armed forces were targeted in the area of Karam al-Qawadis, south of Sheikh Zuwa'id, which resulted in killing 30 soldiers and injuring 26 others.

• On 11th of January, 2015, Capt. Ayman al-Desouki, the officer in the Port Security Department, Rafah, was kidnapped where a group of masked gunmen set up an ambush with 6 individuals in "Al-Wefaq" area, west of Rafah on the international roads” Arish-Rafah” in order to search for wanted people. When the vehicle that carries three officers arrived at the Rafah crossing, a masked man stopped the vehicle and asked them for identity cards. During the review of the cards, the masked man noticed the job profession of the officer inside, then he ordered him to get off the vehicle and there was a car waiting for him by another group of gunmen where they managed to escape to an unknown destination.

• On 13th of January, 2015, the body of Captain Ayman al-Desouki was found in the southern part of the province during a raid by the security forces on the terrorist members in Rafah and Sheikh Zuwa'id areas, revealing that the cause of death was a shot in the head.

• On 18th of January, 2015, a security armored was targeted by terrorists in Al-Tawil area in northern Sinai by exploding a remote device, which resulted in the injury of 4 soldiers.

• On 10/2/2015, the Sinai State Organization published a video clip on the social media sites showing the slaughters of more than 10 people and dumping their bodies in the international road.

• On 12th of January, 2015, the extremist groups published a video on YouTube of the so-called "Egyptian Army Spies" which included the confessions of 4 Sinai people cooperated with the Egyptian army and guided them to their places considering that the reward of cooperation with the army. They were shot at their heads as a punishment for cooperating with the Egyptian army.

• On 24th of March, 2015, an army armored vehicle was targeted in the village of Kharouba, south of Sheikh Zuwa'id in northern Sinai, by detonating an explosive device in one of the armoured vehicles during a combing operation. The device was planted on a road used by military vehicles, which resulted in killing two soldiers and injuring six others.

• On 8/4/2015, a group of takfirin bombed a number of residential areas with mortar
shells during clashes with the security forces in al-Zuhairi village, Sheikh Zuwaïd area in northern Sinai. This incident resulted in the deaths of 21 civilians, including children, who were transferred to the Sheikh Zuwaïd General Hospital. They were Mohammed Salih Salama, 5 months old, Ayoub Falih Salama, 2 years old, Mona Lafi, 21 years old, Salama Salem, 27 years old, Omar Musa Salama, 6 years old. Haniyeh Faraj Salim, 70 years old, Makram Yasser Suleiman, 12 years old, Amina Salih Salama, and Amira Salama Salama.

Moreover, six injured were transferred to Al-Arish General Hospital. They were Khadra Saber Salim, aged 45, with a broken left arm. Rasha Said 'Odeh, 35 years old, she was injured by a left leg fracture, Sadik Ayish Salem, aged 12, suffered a fracture of the spine, Ahmed Faleh Salama, 30 years old, was injured by an abdominal explosion and an intestinal malformation. Rasha Faleh Salama, 11 years old, was injured by a fractured forehead and Yasser Yasser Suleiman, 5 years old, was injured in his hand and abdomen.

The Counter-Terrorism Observatory which is affiliated to the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (Eohr) monitored the explosion of an explosive device that targeted a patrol vehicle while inspecting the security situation on the international road in the city of El Arish in North Sinai, which resulted in the martyrdom of the officer Mohamed El-Sayed Azim Ahmed, Adel Abdel Majeed and the injury of three soldiers from the security forces in North Sinai.

• On 1st of July, 2015, armed men attacked several military ambushes in Sheikh Zuwaïd, including Abu Refai and Sidra ambushes, in addition to an attack on the Sheikh Zuwaïd police station and the detonation of a landmine next to the “El Dara‘eb” ambush, which resulted in the death and injury of several soldiers of the armed forces, the killing of 22 terrorist members and the destruction of 3 (Land Cruiser) vehicles loaded with anti-aircraft guns (14.5 mm).

• On 12/8/2015, the Croatian hostage was executed by ISIS in Sinai, where the accounts of the organization on social media was calling for the slaughter of the Croatian hostage, Tomislav Slubak, after the organization’s deadline for the release and exchange of female prisoners affiliated to radical organizations.
• On 31/5/2016, a police armored vehicle was targeted in the village of Kharouba, south of Sheikh Zuwaïd in North Sinai governorate, which resulted in killing six policemen.
• On 25/6/2016 a terrorist group blew up a security armored vehicle on the road of the village of Joura, south of Sheikh Zwaid with an improvised bomb detonated remotely, resulting in the death of two soldiers and injuring 3 others.
• On 15/8/2016, a terrorist group planted an explosive device in a car which belongs to the security forces. The explosion resulted in the death of 3 soldiers.
• On 15/10/2016, members of extremist group opened fire on a security ambush in the cave area in central Sinai, which resulted in the death of 12 soldiers and 6 others were seriously injured.
• In 2016, members of the "Ansar Beit al Maqdis” organization, kidnapped Sheikh Suleiman Abu Haraz, an elderly and blind sheikh, in front of his house in the farm area, south of the city of al-Arish. This 100 year old man was sentenced to death in front of his sons and family.
• In 2017, dozens of Coptic families in El Arish were forcibly displaced from their homes to other governorates, including Ismailia, to escape the repeated terrorist threats they had suffered especially after seven people were killed by armed terrorist organizations.
• On 24/11/2017 unknown gunmen detonated an explosive device in a mosque in the village of Rawdah east of the city of Bir al-Abd, where the explosion killed at least 235 martyrs and injured more than 109 others. The explosion also caused major damage to the Mosque; additionally the terrorists also set fire to the cars of the residents and then cut off the road leading to the village.
• On 28th of December, 2017, an army officer and five soldiers were killed while combing an area on the international road in northern Sinai.
• On 7th of July, 2018, terrorist groups in Sinai targeted two security checkpoints in the city of Rafah. The attack was carried out using car bomb, and the army responded to them. The clashes resulted in the death and injury of 26 men from the armed forces and killing of 40 terrorists. This attack was considered one of the most brutal attacks in Sinai since July 2015, additionally; ISIS claimed the responsibility for this incident.
• On 28th of October, 2018, a terrorist group attacked one of the security checkpoints of the armed forces in Bir al-Abed area in northern Sinai. They used mortars and RPGs which resulted in the death of 12 soldiers. ISIS already claimed responsibility for this attack. The organization later attempted to repeat the operation on 15th of October in the Qawadis area which resulted in killing 24 terrorists, destroyed four cars and killed six soldiers of the army.
• On 16th of February, 2019, the Islamic State Organization (ISIS) carried out an armed attack on an ambush in “Al Safa” area, near the airport of El Arish. The attack resulted in killing seven attackers and 15 Egyptian security forces, including an officer.
Displacement within Sinai (live testimonies)

Sinai buffer zone: security necessity or forced evacuation?

After the terrorist attacks that took many lives of the armed forces, police officers and civilians in Sinai, the Egyptian authorities has resorted to a new security strategy. The most prominent part of it is the construction of a border between Egypt and Gaza strip which required the demolition of a number of houses in the area and the relocation of residents to other areas.

What happened was the evacuation of this borderline to a depth of not more than 5 kilometres at most, including a group of houses around 600 houses.

This comes within what the authorities called a new strategy to confront "terrorism" after 31 soldiers were killed and 30 injured in two attacks in northern Sinai. The main objective of this strategy was to control the security situation and to block the "sources of terrorism". The security plan includes the transfer of about 250 families and the removal of about 680 houses in the Egyptian Rafah as part of the decision to establish a buffer strip on the border with Gaza, which extends 13 kilometres.

Compensation to the population

The authorities announced that there would be compensation to the population with houses or lands in other areas in addition to funds for urgent accommodation. Furthermore, Local authorities prepared a questionnaire to identify the demands of the affected population where, 65% percent requested cash compensation, while 29% requested cash compensation and a suitable plot of land, and 2% requested alternative housing provided by the state. The Egyptian authorities are seeking to control the security situation and block what they called "the sources of terrorism"

The Egyptian army issued a statement in which it confirmed that the elders of North Sinai expressed their understanding of the measures which are taken by the army.

For his part, Dr. Salah Salam, a member of the North Sinai Governorate and a member of the National Council for Human Rights, confirmed that 890 houses were found containing tunnels in the Rafah area and had to be removed. Additionally the rest of the houses were likely to have tunnels which is perilous not only for the people of Sinai, but for the entire country as well. The Families whom their homes
did not contain tunnels, have been also compensated. Some of the families who have been displaced under the bombardment are considered an urgent case, not a displacement; however, they chose to move to safe places, away from problems, shells and danger. The state provided them with the facilities in the displaced areas, as it is a temporary situation until the area got cleared of terrorists and then they could return back to their homes.

For his part, Sheikh Issa al-Kharfin, who is one of the victims of the terrorist operations, one of the greatest sheikhs of Sinai and one of the fighters who performed their duty during the period of occupation, pointing out that he participated in the wars of 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973. After the liberation of Sinai, he was appointed as the Sheikh of the tribe and then a deputy for four sessions in the Parliament.

Moreover, one of the members of the Egyptian Organization in Sinai said that: "After the 30th of June revolution where the youth of Egypt and its people rose in all regions of Egypt in order to liberate the state from the new occupation, which took Sinai as a fundamental base for them. These groups widely appeared to intimidate the people of Sinai and destroy their lands. Consequently, the terrorist attacks have started which vehemently targeted the Egyptian soldiers in the army, Police, and civilians as well. In addition to their attempts to destroy the homeland and to impose their sovereignty on Sinai.

The former MP Abdelhamid Salma was assassinated by the sons of Al-Fawakhiria clan after performing the Fajr prayer in Ramadan because of his support and cooperation with the armed forces, in addition to the assassination attempt of Sheikh Issa Al-Kharafin but he fortunately survived, the assassination of the son of the Sawarka tribe and one of the police officers Muhammad al-Sawarka, who works at the camp alzohor of the central security in Sheikh Zweid, as well as other sheikhs of other tribes. Nearly 200 people or more from different tribes have been killed including " Rumailat, Swarkh, Tarabin, Brahmah, Abrikat and Reishat from the border area, simply because of their cooperation with the armed forces against these terrorists.

Furthermore, a second member of the Egyptian organization in Sinai confirmed that: "Many citizens fled from border areas in order to distance themselves from the terroristic practices that occur around them all the time. They became displaced after leaving their villages and simple houses, fearing that they would also be affected by the military operations against the terrorist locations. In addition, many olive farms have been destroyed in some areas, especially Rafah and Sheikh Zuwaideh areas and the parallel farmland of Al-Arish airport.

Many rockets and missiles were intended to target the army and the police, have accidently landed on the homes of some people, markets and residential areas in Al Arish. This had resulted in killing many people as well as material losses in some shops in the same area. Sinai has been living a state of fear, terrorism and
psychological and moral devastation where the daily news have been exclusively announcing the killings, beheadings, destruction, and kidnapping of many tribesmen who had been cooperating with the armed forces.

A third member of the organization from Sinai confirmed that: "The citizens of Sinai have suffered from terrorism of all kinds. The armed terrorist groups set up ambushes in some areas in the cities of Sheikh Zuwaïd and Rafah. They also inspect private and public cars and buses, especially those carrying teachers and customs officials, in a search for police officers. This has caused panic and fear to the defenceless citizens. Additionally, they also launched campaigns to distribute leaflets in the cities of Sheikh Zuwaïd and Rafah, urging citizens not to cooperate with the security services and threaten them in case of cooperation, they will be killed.

The National Council for Human Rights made four visits to the people of Sinai in the committee which was established by the President of the Republic. The Council noted that 250 of Sinai residents were beheaded and the tribes there demanded to take revenge for their children, but the armed forces refused as the Egyptian state is based on the rule of law.

**Challenges facing the army and the police in the war against terrorism in North Sinai:**

1) The terrorist organizations do not have constant places and their members hide among the tribes and the population, where they are located among the population in areas inside and around the cities of Rafah, Sheikh Zuwaïd and Arish. They also hide in the crops and forests, so the process of killing or catching them exposes these tribes and their populations to great dangers, which is the result of the resistance of some tribes to the army forces. Therefore, these organizations are treated with great caution so that the civilian population will not suffer any harm.

2) The nature of the land in Sinai is another challenge, there are some mountains that constitute a shelter for terrorist organizations such as the Mountain of Halal, which is located in the centre of Sinai and south of El Arish, it is also a common element in all terrorist operations on the land of Sinai where many illegal members of terrorist organizations, drug traffickers, weapons and gangs of human smuggling into Israel could easily escape from the mountain because of its entrances and exists.

**The Army and police efforts in combating terrorism:**

**Eagle (1)**

It began on 12th of August, 2011, following several explosions which targeted the gas pipeline to Israel, and the announcement of an organization called itself "Army of Islam Liberation", where it was intended to turn Sinai into an "extremist emirate."
Eagle (2)

On 5th of August, 2012, the military launched a military campaign to purge Sinai of "terrorist outposts" in response to the killing of 16 soldiers in an armed attack near the Karam Abu Salem crossing in North Sinai. The operation was carried out in two phases with the support of the air and naval forces. At this time, 31 tunnels were destroyed along the border with the Gaza Strip, 32 attackers were killed during the security operations and large quantities of weapons were confiscated.

The right of the martyr

In September 2015, the armed forces announced a military operation called "Martyr's Right" which aims to eliminate terrorist members in several areas in North Sinai Governorate. The first phase lasted 16 days, during which dozens of militants were killed. The operation continued at various stages until 2017. The Egyptian army succeeded in killing about 500 terrorist elements belonging to the Ansar Beit al-Maqdis organization in northern Sinai, destroying 130 vehicles and 250 targets, caches and gathering areas, other than stores and administrative needs.

The Comprehensive Operation (Sinai 2018) and the fight against terrorism:

The comprehensive military operation (Sinai, 2018) succeeded in destroying the infrastructure of the terrorist members from oaks, trenches, tunnels, weapons stores, ammunition, improvised explosive devices, administrative needs, media centres and the discovery, seizure and destruction of large numbers of vehicles, motorcycles and large quantities of explosives, weapons, ammunition and bombs in addition to arresting more than 500 terrorists, whether terrorist members or criminal defendants fleeing the implementation of their rulings. The terrorist suspects were referred to the competent judicial investigations while the criminals were referred to the judicial enforcement bodies. As well as the destruction of more than (1200) explosive devices and more than (1086) vehicles and (1000) motorcycles and (420) farms for narcotic plants, 120 tons of narcotics and 25 million drug tablets, in addition to the discovery and destruction of more than 16 tunnel openings on the northern Sinai border. The comprehensive operation of Sinai (2018) included not only Sinai, but extended to the three strategic axes on the eastern, western and southern borders of the country.

Over the course of ten months from the start of the comprehensive military operation in Sinai 2018, the armed forces have achieved many strategic objectives related to the three axes of the strategy of counter-terrorism. At the level of
monitoring and eliminating the leaders of terrorist organizations, the overall operation managed to target many leaders of Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis in February 2018. Moreover, the most recent success in this area was the elimination of the organization’s leader Abu Osama al-Masri and many of the leaders of the first row, including Khairat Sami al-Sabki, the administrative officer of the organization, the terrorist Mohammed Jamal, the official of the media organization of the organization, and the terrorist Islam harmony, which directly affected the structure of the terrorist organization in terms of effectiveness and the ability to carry out terrorist operations.

The comprehensive operation has also succeeded in securing the borders and blocking the sources of the material funding and logistical support for the terrorist groups. It consists of all the main weapons and members of the armed forces in cooperation with the Egyptian police forces. Furthermore, The Egyptian border and naval forces managed to tighten control over the land and sea borders, whether related to the scope of the operation in the east of the country or on the western and southern borders which resulted in the closure of the routes used for the transfer of funds, weapons, equipment and personnel to the terrorist groups in North Sinai.

The Comprehensive military operation (Sinai 2018) has led to a significant decrease in the number of terrorist operations in Sinai in 2018 compared to previous years, in addition to a clear decline in the number of martyrs from the army and police forces in Sinai compared to previous years.

In 2018, the Ministry of Interior carried out a series of successful security operations in which police officers launched pre-emptive operations that aborted the terrorist plans, based on high efficiency in tracking, surveillance and collecting information:

1) On 28th of November, the security forces shot down a terrorist cell in Sinai, which resulted in killing 11 terrorists and arresting 6 others.
2) On 23rd of December, the National Security managed to monitor a terrorist outpost that planned to carry out a series of terrorist attacks against vital installations and members of the armed forces and police in one of the remote areas of Al-Arish. Some clashes took place between the police forces and the terrorist members which resulted in Killing 14 terrorists, with many firearms, ammunition and improvised explosive devices.
3) On 29th of December, hours after the “Mariottia” terrorist attack, the Ministry of the Interior raided a number of terrorist outposts in the governorates of North Sinai and Giza and directed several security strikes against terrorist members who were prepared to carry out a series of hostilities targeting state institutions, especially the economic and tourism industry, armed forces and Christian houses of worship. This
has resulted in killing 40 terrorists in an exchange of fire.

A table showing the number of terrorist operations and the number of victims in Egypt during the period from 2015 to 2019

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<thead>
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<th>Victims</th>
<th>Number of Terrorist Operation</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>258</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>396</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>539</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1294</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A chart showing the number of terrorist operations and the number of victims in Egypt during the period from 2015 to 2019
Fourth: Conclusion and Recommendations:

The challenges we face in our battle with the terrorist groups, particularly in Sinai, urgently call for concerted efforts in this battle. In essence, it is a "battle for existence," as President Abdelfattah al-Sisi called it. This necessitates, as soon as possible, taking a number of measures and procedures. Moreover, the government must make every effort to obtain the victims' rights as a result of the terrorist operations committed and the material, moral and physical damage resulting from these operations as well as intimidating and spreading the state of fear between the citizens.

The governments have focused their attention on enacting laws in order to prosecute the perpetrators, without paying attention to the issue of compensating the injured parties. The Egyptian legislator has addressed the issue of terrorism after the terrorist attacks that widely took place in Egypt which aims to threaten the security of the society, destabilize it and undermine the foundations of democracy and freedom. Thus, law No. 97 of 1992 was issued in order to amend certain articles of the Penal Code, criminal procedures and certain other laws to confront terrorist crime, leaving those injured by these processes to the general rules of responsibility and the State's mercy and assistance to the victims.

The Egyptian government should be concerned to compensate the victims of terrorism, similar to what happened with the victims and martyrs of the Al-Rawdah terrorist incident, and also should compensate the affected Sinai residents for destroying their agricultural land.

Eventually, in this report, the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (Eohr) presents a number of recommendations to the competent parties, in order to get out of the miserable situation in which the people of North Sinai live.

Combating terrorism at all levels, mobilizing and confronting against the forces of darkness, supported by the consciousness and enthusiasm of the masses requires:

First: At the military level:

- Supporting the police security body in the face of terrorism, both in terms of armaments and information, with the need to restore specialized security expertise and capabilities in this issue.
- Forming Special Forces to counter terrorism with the highest degree of training and skills, while providing the most advanced weapons and global techniques for these forces.
- Forming a national council that aims to confront terrorism, which includes experts
and specialists in all political, security, legal, economic, intellectual and social fields.
• Activating a comprehensive community response to terrorism through political parties, NGOs, social and economic policies which aim at achieving comprehensive development, focusing on renewing the religious discourse in order to counter radical and abnormal ideas of the terrorist groups, developing serious and conscious media approaches and policies, and developing and updating educational policies to prepare generations more aware of the approaches and objectives of these extremist groups.

Second: On the security and development level:

• A clear general policy of the state to confront the crisis in Sinai: This requires the coordination and holding of meetings between the various state institutions, their agencies from all regions and the different tribes of Sinai.
• Constructing an integrated development plan, implementing the studies and research which were conducted on the case of Sinai, completing the land reclamation plans and settling the affected Egyptians as a means to eradicate terrorism in this border area. Therefore, there should be a rapid return in the project of the “Peace Canal” in order to reclaim one million acres, with the importance of preparing studies to modernize farming and irrigation systems in Sinai.
• Establishing the new city of Rafah in response to the demands of the people of the border strip in Rafah. This new city should include modern services and facilities, agricultural and industrial areas, residential areas suitable for the desert environment, future expansion in the establishment of specialized colleges in the fields of energy, biological agriculture, and many others.
• Provide the necessary protection for Sinai residents who deal with the security forces and trace the terrorist members of the armed groups in North Sinai.
• Provide the people with the humanitarian needs during the curfew periods in North Sinai, and reduce the number of hours of this curfew, in order to allow them to exercise their daily life normally as well as their business and trade.
• Provide the sources of livelihood to the people who were displaced from their homes on the border strip in Rafah.
Fifth: Pictures and documents

Tunnels on the border
The assassination of civilian judges

The assassination of judges while supervising elections
Targeting mosques and killing worshipers
Slaughtering the blind “Sheikh Abu Haraz”, 103 years old
Targeting ambulances and paramedics